

Deakin CREATE & The Crescent Champions Graduate Career Clinics: 2021 Impact Report



CREATE

Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training and Education



1. Introduction

In 2021 Deakin University's Centre for Refugee Employment, Advocacy, Training, and Education (CREATE) partnered with the Crescent Foundation to develop and deliver career clinics for recent or soon to be university graduates from refugee backgrounds. The purpose of these clinics were to equip participants with the skill sets and confidence to transition from university to work and find employment commensurate with their qualification/s. The clinics were based on a mentee/mentor model. Mentees were individuals from refugee backgrounds who had recently graduated from university or were in the final stages of their studies. Mentors were individuals with sound knowledge of the Australian employment landscape and leaders in their industries. Each mentee was matched with a mentor, and they worked together over the course of the seven-month program. Each month a new topic was introduced and presented in an interactive Zoom session, attended by both mentees and mentors. In the weeks between these sessions, mentees and mentors would work together on a series of activities related to each month's topic. Examples of topics included career adaptability, CV development, writing cover letters, responding to key selection criteria, developing personal brand, and networking. To accommodate for the large volume of participants, participants were broken down into three groups. Group one had 25 mentees, group two had 15 mentees, and group three had 16 mentees. This document offers a summary of the overall impact and success of the clinic.

2. Career clinic mentees' participation

Overall, 60 mentees registered for the Career Clinics. Out of these 60, 4 did not commence. This left a total of 56 mentees. Please see figure 1A.

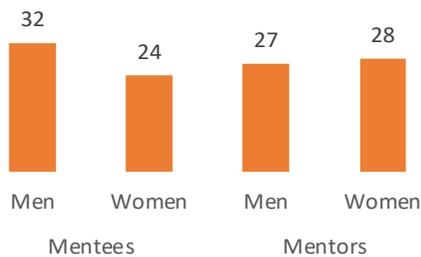
Figure 1A: N=56

Number of mentees completed the clinic in each group



Figure 1B: Gender Breakdown

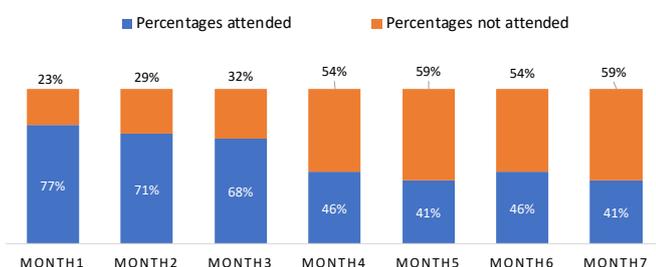
Gender breakdown mentors and mentees



We had higher percentages of attendance from the beginning of the careers clinic for mentees. However, for all three clinics attendance decreased over time. Please see figure 1C for mentees' combined attendance over the seven months.

Figure 1C: N=56

TOTAL MENTEE ATTENDANCE %



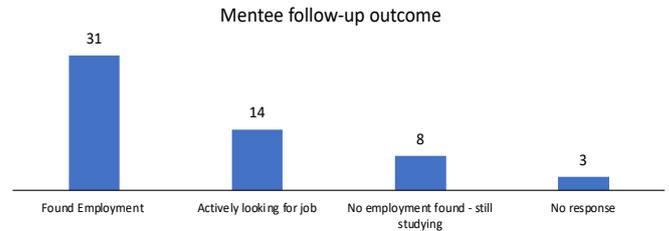
3. Employment and study outcomes

Surveys were sent to all mentees (including 2 x reminders) asking for their feedback and progress to date. We also made several phone calls to those who did not complete the survey to determine their employment, education and change of job seeking behaviours since completing the clinic. To date, we have received a response rate up to 95% (53/56).

58.50% (31/53) of the mentees have found some form of paid employment. Furthermore, 14 mentees are actively looking for employment opportunities and 8 mentees are still finishing their studies (3 mentees did not respond to the survey or phone calls)

Please see figure 2A & 2B:

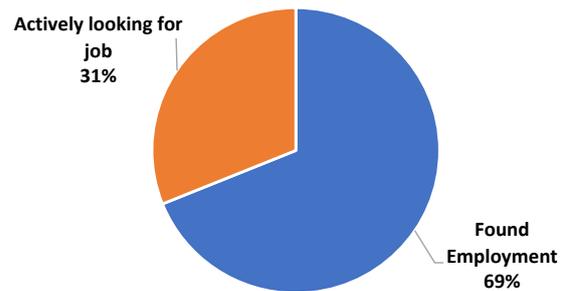
Figure 2A: N=56



Of the total graduates (N=45) while 69% found employment, 31% are still looking.

Figure 2B: N=45

Graduate Employment Outcome %



The employment outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) migrant and refugee graduates are typically worse than those of the general population (Harvey & Mallman, 2019). For example, research has found that approximately only 40% of young adults aged 18–24 from a CALD background were employed in the labour market, compared with around 70% of their Australian-born counterparts (Hugo et al., 2014).

In addition, Mestan and Harvey (2014) found that CALD migrant and refugee graduates in Australia were 67% more likely to be seeking full-time employment postgraduation than non-CALD graduates. Furthermore, Hugo (2011) found that university graduates from a refugee background were 12% less likely to be employed in professional roles than the general population.

Researchers have also highlighted that CALD migrant and refugee graduates are more likely to be underemployed, that is, working in professions for which their degree is not required (Hugo, 2011), they are more likely to be receiving lower salaries than the general population (Li et al., 2016; Mestan & Harvey, 2014), and unduly ending up in low-skilled jobs, where they typically earn less money than their local counterparts (Colic-Peisker, 2009).

Indeed, individuals from migrant and refugee backgrounds—including university graduates face significant barriers to securing employment that is commensurate to their qualifications.

4. Feedback from mentees

Quotes from Mentees

Mentee 1:

"It was really nice because it may seem like I wasn't alone here. The clinic people have been amazing... so supportive. They are trying to find a way to help you... My first mentor was amazing. We were talking a lot during the clinic... almost twice of three times per week... I know I can count on her if I need something. She was absolutely brilliant. It was amazing. I'm really glad to have joined these clinics".

Mentee 2:

"She (the mentor) really helped me with transition into a new area or sector... She was very supportive by encouraging me to do things so sometimes there are opportunities".

Mentee 3:

"I think the fact that we could spend time with our mentors outside the Career Clinic was really great because you know... we had more time and we were more focused. And then I think the fact that they matched people... the mentors and mentees based on some sort of commonalities was also really great. It (the Career Clinic) was really helpful and sort of exceeded my expectation, because when I started the Career Clinic I was looking for a job but I didn't know that I would get a job at the end. Obviously I was very satisfied."

Example of the employment success of the Career Clinic.

Email received 26 Jan 2022.

Hi Karen,

Thank you for all your efforts and hard work to make the graduate clinic a pleasant experience and now the gift card yay!! I gained so much knowledge and found the most amazing mentor (who still guides me in my career to this very day).

Update on my education and career:

I finished my honours in neuroscience with a class I (equivalent to a HD).

I was offered a part-time medical Scientist/research assistant role at the neuroscience department of Monash which I've been getting trained for since I graduated and will officially start before the end of the month.

In the meantime I have also been working as a casual laboratory assistant at the Australian Clinical labs.

And lastly, I was invited to an interview for another research assistant role at the neurosurgery department of The Royal Melbourne Hospital. If successful in obtaining the position, I will be conducting research for the director of neurosurgery on brain tumors.

All great things!

Current plan is to work for a few years before applying for medicine or possibly a PhD in neuroscience.

Finally, this wouldn't have been possible without all your support and help throughout the years. Thank you so much.

Warmest regards,

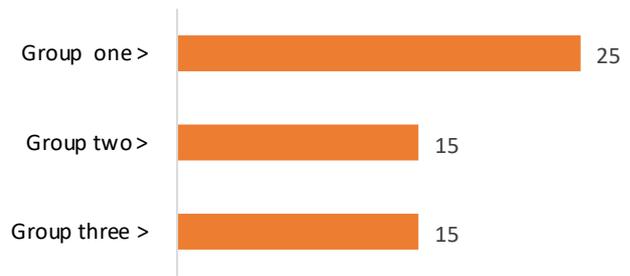
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5. Career clinic mentor participation

Fifty-seven mentors registered for the Career Clinic, in total 55 completed the seven-month program. Two mentors dropped out due to their mentees dropping out. Some mentors did not attend some of the sessions; however, they have continued to work with their mentees. Please see figure 4A.

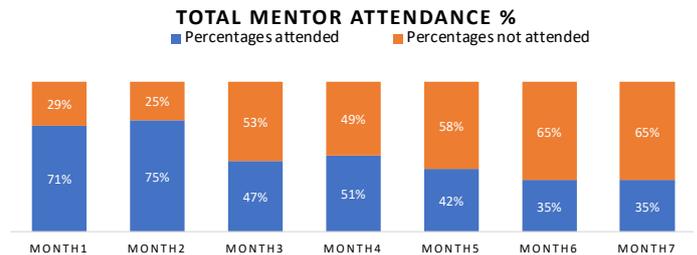
Figure 4A: N=55

Number of mentors completed the clinic per group



Over the course of seven-months, mentors attended most of the sessions but towards the end of the program attendance declined. Please see figure 4B for combined attendance for mentors in all of the three sessions.

Figure 4B: N=55



6. Feedback from mentors

Mentor 1:

I think it is satisfying to just see the growth in her (mentee's) skill set. Over the six months (of the clinic program), she has really grabbed a lot which is great. I think it's (Career Clinic) a really good program. I think getting some companies involved... get started with HR directors and get them aware of the people that are out there... that would be a really good thing to do".

Mentor 2:

"I don't know how to describe it but hmm... I just feel more fulfilled. You know, sometimes I am the one telling him about what's going on at work... I feel I can do something good... a kind of meaning like... I am a partner in a law firm, and I don't get that feeling from running (the firm)".

Mentor 3:

"It's nice for me to ... my wisdom to impart. I've had a lot of help (from others) throughout my career and my career is elevated very quickly. And yeah... it's nice for me to do this (being a mentor at the Career Clinic) ... I make time during the year to do it even though my time is very limited. But that's one of the things in my week which I really enjoy".

Mentor 4:

"I was able to help her (mentee) quite a lot. She got really good feedback (from the Career Clinic) so that was helpful. I would be happy to be involved in the program this year again. And I think I'll probably do a better job with the benefit of having done this initial one".

Mentor 5:

"There are benefits for organizations in making sure that they active recruit (people from refugee backgrounds). With diversity in mind that it doesn't mean just hiring people like themselves. It's good to see that you know... Accenture, for example, has recognized that. From a personal perspective, you know... I just find it rewarding. I see this (being a mentor in the Career Clinic) as an opportunity to be a role model for other people. And it's very easy to do it and it feels very good. That's kind of my main motivation I think".

Mentor 6:

"I think for me it's really the moments when something that I do is actually making a difference and help someone. I am a very pragmatic person, so I really like to see some you know kind of positive outcomes. I would like the mentees to see benefits of it".

References

Colic-Peisker, V. (2009). *Visibility, settlement success and life satisfaction in three refugee communities in Australia*. *Ethnicities*, 9(2), 175–199.

Harvey, A. & Mallman, M. (2019). *Beyond cultural capital: Understanding the strengths of new migrants within higher education*. *Policy Futures in Education*, 17(5), 657–673.

Hugo, G. (2011). *A significant contribution: The economic, social and civic contributions of first and second generation humanitarian entrants: Summary of findings*. Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Li, I. W., Mahuteau, S., Dockery, A. M., Junankar, P. N. & Mavromaras, K. (2016). *Labour market outcomes of Australian university graduates from equity groups*. Report submitted to the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Curtin University.

Mestan, K. & Harvey, A. (2014). *The higher education continuum: access, achievement and outcomes among students from non-English speaking backgrounds*. *Higher Education Review*, 46(2), 61–80.



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